

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 (ISO) R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 159777

EXDIS - POUCH BAGHDAD FOR INFO

FOLL REPEAT STATE 159777 ACTION ALGIERS CAIRO JIDDA RABAT
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QUOTE

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINS, LE

SUBJECT: ABDUCTION OF COLONEL MORGAN IN BEIRUT

1. THE FOLLOWING WILL BRING YOU UP TO DATE ON MORGAN'S
ABDUCTION:

2. COL. ERNEST R. MORGAN, USA, WAS ABDUCTED JUNE 29 IN
BEIRUT, DURING THE CIVIL UNREST THAT OBTAINED IN THE CITY.
HE WAS RETURNING FROM A CENTO EXERCISE IN PAKISTAN TO HIS
POST IN ANKARA; REMAINING OVERNIGHT IN BEIRUT IN TRANSIT.

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3. ON JULY 6 AN ORGANIZATION CALLING ITSELF THE "REVOLU-
TIONARY SOCIALIST ACTION ORGANIZATION" SENT TO
AMBASSADOR GODLEY IN BEIRUT, THROUGH AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE,
A PACKAGE CONTAINING SIX PICTURES OF COL. MORGAN, TWO
TAPES OF MESSAGES FROM THE COLONEL, AND A LETTER TO

AMBASSADOR GODLEY. THE TAPES CONTAINED MESSAGES TO COL. MORGAN'S MOTHER AND HIS WIFE AND SON, AND A GENERAL STATEMENT BY MORGAN THAT HE WAS BEING TREATED WELL AND UNDERSTOOD THAT CERTAIN DEMANDS HAD BEEN MADE TO THE USG WHICH HE HOPED WOULD BE GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION. THE LETTER PRESENTED THREE DEMANDS: A) THAT THE USG PUBLICIZE THE LETTER, INCLUDING BROADCASTING BY VOA; B) THAT THE USG ASK THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO DESIST IN SEARCHING FOR MORGAN; C) THAT THERE BE DELIVERED TO THE INHABITANTS OF AN IMPOVERISHED SECTION OF BEIRUT SPECIFIED SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF FOODSTUFFS, CLOTHING AND BUILDING MATERIALS. THE DEMANDS WERE TO BE MET BY 2100 HOURS LOCAL TIME JULY 9.

THE LETTER STATED "IF YOU DO NOT MEET OUR DEMANDS, WE WILL NOT RESPECT THE LIFE OF ONE OF YOUR SPIES AND EXECUTIONERS. WHEN WE ARE SURE YOU ARE IN FULFILLMENT (OF OUR DEMANDS) WE PROMISE YOU THAT WE WILL SET YOUR SPY, COLONEL MORGAN, FREE."

4. WE HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY AND IS ENDEAVORING TO ARRANGE COL. MORGAN'S SAFE RELEASE. WE HAVE TOLD THE LEBANESE THAT, AS A MATTER OF POLICY, THE USG WOULD NOT AGREE TO PAY ANY RANSOM, WHETHER IN MONEY OR GOODS. WE HAVE ALSO TOLD THEM THAT WE WOULD NOT REQUEST THEM TO CEASE SEARCHING FOR MORGAN.

5. IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERIES, WE HAVE CONFIRMED RECEIPT OF THE COMMUNICATION FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ACTION ORGANIZATION, SAID THAT ITS CONTENTS WERE IMMEDIATELY MADE KNOWN TO THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, STATED THAT AMBASSADOR GODLEY HAS DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TAKLA, AND SAID THAT IT WOULD NOT BE CONDUCIVE TO THE SAFE RETURN OF COL. MORGAN TO COMMENT FURTHER AT THIS TIME.

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6. WHILE THE NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION IS UNFAMILIAR TO US, OUR INFORMATION LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT THE ORGANIZATION IS A GROUP OF URBAN GUERRILLAS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF MUSHID AHMED SHIBBU. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SHIBBU PARTICIPATED IN THE PFLP ATTACK ON AN EL-AL AIRPLANE IN ATHENS AIRPORT IN 1970. FROM THIS AND OTHER INDICATIONS, IT APPEARS THAT THE ORGANIZATION MAY HAVE SOME CONNECTION WITH THE PFLP. KISSINGER UNQUOTE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KIDNAPPING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE159777
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: S/CCT: JTBROWNE:MP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 XGDS-4
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750235-1081
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197507104/baaaaopj.tel
Line Count: 106
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 JUN 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 971008
Subject: n/a
TAGS: CASC, PINS, LE, US, PFOR, (MORGAN, ERNEST R)
To: BEIRUT
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006